

The Southeast News

VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 4

FEBRUARY 1966

What Is The Church To Do About Its Dropouts?

The government, and a lot of other agencies, are getting excited about the great number of young people dropping out of high school — or even before finishing grammar school — at a time when automation and other thrusts of an affluent economy are leaving less jobs for the unskilled of any age. Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz, in addressing a mass meeting of young people recently, said that young people today must have at least fourteen years of schooling (two years beyond high school) because computers in use today can do anything a high school graduate can do, and since they're not on the payroll, are getting the jobs. Yet, we are told that "7.5 millions will leave high school without a diploma during this decade." In some areas, as many as 7 out of every 10 dropouts have no job. This means that they are on relief, roaming the streets, and probably on their way to jail. "At least 70 per cent of all dropouts (in some communities, 90 per cent) come from homes with the lowest family incomes. The dropout among Negro, Spanish American and Indian American youth is two, three and sometimes, four times higher than that for white American youth. The above statistics are given by Linda Blackwood, writing in the current issue of United Church Herald. She estimates that 1,000,000 young people will drop out of high school in 1966.

THE CHURCH HAS HAD A DROPOUT PROBLEM FOR YEARS! But we have not been excited about it, perhaps not even concerned! It is at the point in the young person's life when parents can no longer demand that they go to church and Sunday School that they have been choosing to become dropouts. This has been the case as long as we can remember. But we can't remember that the church, the ministers, or the Sunday School officers and teachers have had an effective plan, or made a sustained effort, to mend the gap through which our young people walk out of the church and into the world to come back, if at all, when they begin to bring their children to church.

Is it not time each local church took stock of its record, looks at its leakage (from fourteen to eighteen years is

the big gap) and sets itself to the task of re-examining its program, its teaching level, the vitality of its lesson materials, its leadership ability and dedication to its task? We are persuaded that if the church had done its job well, the government, and society as a whole, would not now be spending billions of dollars to save the dropouts from themselves in an economy that has already passed them by.

What happens in your church when a young person drops out of church and Sunday School? Who goes after him before the habit of regular attendance is broken? Do you have a plan of action?

Not only must the church become concerned with the spiritual dropouts of high school age, but also with the fact that the dropout rate amongst adults is also alarmingly high. Elsewhere in this issue of The Southeast News you will find statistics showing that perhaps not more than 50 per cent of adult members attend church with satisfactory frequency. What else can we expect of their children than what we are seeing?

Who is concerned about the 50 per cent who do not attend, except on special occasions, or at their convenience when nothing else gets in the way? While secular institutions and agencies are concerned about the dropout problem in our schools and are willing to spend billions of dollars to change the whole educational system if needs be to remedy the situation, it is high time the church becomes concerned with saving the whole man. If we can bring Spiritual Health to our sick society it can be made well indeed, and that has been the mission of the church from the beginning — to make men whole!

Are YOU willing to GET YOUR CHURCH ROLLING?

Jesse H. Dollar
Interim Minister
Southeast Conference

THE SOUTHEAST NEWS

Second-Class Postage Paid at
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Published monthly by and for
the churches of the

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

The United Church of Christ

673 Piedmont Avenue N. E.

Atlanta, Ga. 30308 TRinity 4-2558

Single Subscription \$1.50 Per Year

Group Subscription \$1.00 Per Year

STAFF

Rev. Jesse H. Dollar Editor

Printed by The Roanoke Leader

Roanoke, Alabama

Vol. XIV Feb. 1966 No. 4

Superintendent's Corner

This certainly is a new "corner" for me to be in! But I'll try to keep my corner free of cobwebs.

First, I want to ask our churches, pastors and people to be patient with us as we seek to do a job which was not of our choosing, but taken only to help, as best we can, to keep the work of our churches moving toward the goals which we have set before us.

I have just returned from French Lick, Indiana, where the General Assembly of our church met for a week (this is not General Synod, which is our national delegated body where our conference superintendents, representatives of all our instrumentalities, committees, etc., met for sharing plans and programs of the total church at work in the world. To feel the "pulse" of our great church beating out the rhythm of its High Calling, having our vision lifted to see the work to which we are dedicated throughout the world, and to be reassured that we are not blind to the needs of our people here at home, is an experience one cannot soon forget. One always comes away from such gatherings reassured that ours is, indeed, a great church going about its mission of saving the world for Christ.

I shall be serving in as many ways as possible, knowing that as a part-time worker I cannot do justice to the great needs which a conference minister is called upon to meet.

It is heartening to see that some of

News From Our Churches

We are happy to report that several of our churches in the convention are moving forward with improving their buildings and facilities, and otherwise making progress.

NEW HOPE CHURCH in Chambers County (the mother church of our denomination in Alabama), has just finished a project, including the purchase of new pews, pulpit, communion table, flower stands, and the installation of wine colored carpet throughout the entire altar, pulpit section and center aisle. Approximately \$5,000.00 was expended; the sanctuary made unusually beautiful by refinishing the floors and remodeling the front entrance.

All bills were paid when the work was finished.

The Rev. Olin E. Sheppard is the minister of New Hope Church.

BETHHEL CHURCH, West Point, Ga., is in the midst of a renovation program similar to that done in New Hope Church. They, too, are installing new pews and furnishings, putting in new windows, and otherwise improving their church property.

The Rev. Bill Hodnett is the minister of Bethel Church.

THE LOWELL CHURCH, though without a minister at present, has voted to build a new parsonage. Plans are being considered either for extensive remodeling and modernizing the old parsonage, or relocating and building a new house.

THE LANGDALE CHURCH is in the

our churches that have not sent in reports for the Year Book for some time have sent them in. While it is a source of regret that so many of our churches have not given to Our Christian World Mission for some time, some have taken up their responsibilities and are giving increased amounts. We pray that soon we may all be one in our giving to the work of Christ and His church as we seek to answer His call to go and preach, teach, help, heal and lead the lost to our Savior. In His Spirit, let us move forward.

midst of a campaign to increase its Sunday School enrollment, church attendance and membership. It has just completed its Every-Member Canvass and has begun publication of a weekly news sheet labeled "EVANGEL," which is expertly edited and graphically put together.

The Rev. Allen B. Hollis, Jr. is the minister of the Langdale church.

ROBBINS, TENNESSEE — We have just learned that our Board for Homeland Ministries has approved a grant of \$15,000.00 to apply to the cost of building a Community Center in Robbins, Tenn., which facility will lend itself nobly to the work of our churches in that immediate area.

The Rev. Annie R. Campbell is the minister of the Barton Chapel Church at Robbins, Tenn.

CENTRAL CHURCH, Atlanta, Ga., has obtained an option in Northeast Atlanta on approximately 8½ acres of land, looking toward the re-location of its fine church in a new and growing area of the fastest growing city in the south.

The Rev. Frederick A. Meyer is the minister of Central Church.

BONANZA COMMUNITY is a development south of Atlanta in Clayton County, in which 50 to 100 homes have already been erected and people are moving in. Through the Board for Homeland Ministries the convention has purchased a choice lot which fronts on U. S. Highway 41, and we are looking forward to following through on survey and the establishment of a new church in that community which, we are told, will have about 12,000 to 15,000 people in very nice single unit dwellings; with shopping centers and all other facilities for a prosperous self-contained community. Soon there will be erected on this lot a sign which will indicate to all who travel Highway 41 that this site is the future home of another United Church of Christ.

Our congratulations to all these churches and leaders.

If your church is, or has recently undertaken new programs and improvements, please share it with others through The Southeast News.

Rev. Dr. Jesse H. Dollar Interim Superintendent

The Personnel Committee of the Southeast Convention, charged with the responsibility of securing a successor to Rev. Dr. James H. Lightbourne, Jr., recommended to the Board of Directors of the convention that the Rev. Dr. Jesse H. Dollar be asked to serve as interim superintendent (conference minister) until the successor had been named. At its meeting on January 18, 1966, the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to accept this recommendation. This, indeed, is a fortunate arrangement for the convention since Dr. Dollar is a churchman of wide experience and is very well qualified for the task.



Dr. and Mrs. Dollar are presently living in Roanoke, Alabama, having decided upon an early retirement. We wish to express our appreciation to them for temporarily readjusting their retirement plans to respond to the need of the Southeast Convention — or should we say "Southeast Conference?"

Dr. Dollar will be available in the convention office for consultation and service with the able assistance of Mrs. McCord, secretary, and Rufus G. Obrecht, moderator. The immediate concerns of the Southeast Convention are in capable hands.

In the meantime, the Personnel Committee is searching diligently for the right person to lead us in the critical and creative period confronting us.

Both Dr. Dollar and his wife are na-

The Southeast Convention Will Meet In Nashville

One of the decisions reached by the Board of Directors was to set dates and select a place for the annual meeting of the Southeast Convention. The date is April 23-24, 1966. The place is the First United Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn.

One thing which should make us anxious for every church to be represented is the fact that the host church was formerly an E & R church. Since we have only four such churches in the area of our convention it will give us an opportunity to become better acquainted with people whom we have not had a chance to know.

Churches should act now, if they have not already done so, to elect their delegates—three (3) from each church. Churches having a membership of over 100 shall be entitled to one additional voting delegate for each additional 100 members or major fraction thereof. Visitors are always welcome, but churches are asked to send only the number of delegates to which they are entitled.

Is Your Church Going Up Or Down?

Figures just released by two national agencies which engage in gathering information on many subjects, in one case the Gallup Poll, show that only 44% of the adults in America attend church regularly — down 10% in 10 years. The other poll is more optimistic, saying that the average adult attending church at least once a week is 54%.

Local church figures vary widely in reporting additions and losses in membership. In some sections of our convention more churches reported loss of members last year than reported gains. This fact should challenge every minister and every church officer to see that membership received will increase favorably with the new millions being added to our population every year.

tives of Alabama. Dr. Dollar served for many years in the old Southern Convention of Congregational Christian Churches, and has had wide experience in both conference and national work. He has served on the General Council of C. C. Churches, the Executive Coun-

Things That Interest You

The following figures giving statistical data concerning our denomination were taken from reports at the end of 1964.

The United Church of Christ — our denomination — has 2,228,080 members in the United States; the churches gave \$16,728,516 toward Our Christian World Mission. This includes all monies given for all benevolent purposes, including associations, conferences, conventions and individuals. \$6,558,834 was received from endowments, legacies, etc. The people in our churches gave \$145,920,692 for local expenses, making a total raised in all churches for all purposes of \$169,208,042, in 1964.

Only \$4,045,500 was given to foreign missions. We are told that \$22.00 will pay for the program of Our Christian World Mission for one minute! The figures from the above table show that on the average each member in the churches of our denomination gave only \$10.45 in 1964 for benevolences, which means that you and I, as average members, gave only enough to OCWM in 1964 to support our world outreach for 28 seconds! Have we given enough?

Figures for 1965: In 1965 our churches gave \$10,613,757 to our national boards and instrumentalities. The 40 conferences of our fellowship retained \$6,596,097 for work within the conferences. This makes a total of \$17,209,855 given for Our Christian World Mission in 1965. (The amount received from endowments, legacies, etc. for 1965 has not been announced as yet). This is an increase of \$481,339 over the amount given in 1964. Of the above amount we of the Southeast Convention gave only \$8,135.19, while we received from our denomination more than \$20,000.00!

The program for 1966 is to increase this amount by \$1,000,000.00. Each church should see that it has a part in this needed increase for our national and world ministries.

The "BREAKTHROUGH" program mentioned above will help you lift your vision of the world's need for Christ.

cil of the United Church, and others. He is presently also serving as Area Minister of the East Alabama Association.

Dr. and Mrs. Dollar are at home at 51 Lakeview Drive, Roanoke, Alabama.

E. Alabama Association Plans Advance

At its annual meeting in October the East Alabama Association heard reports from its committees. Two of these reports carried recommendations to the pastors and churches which we feel should be shared with all of our ministers and associations. Excerpts from these reports follow:

From the Report of the Committee on Missions and Stewardship:

We feel a sense of deep need for a strong and well-ordered program of Stewardship in all our churches, not only to enable them to strengthen their local church programs, but to make possible the money with which they have the joy of doing their rightful share in Our Christian World Mission.

1. We urge our pastors to encourage the people in their parishes to attend meetings where the programs and plans of our United Church of Christ are being presented and studied in order that they may have the sense of belonging to and having a part in the world-wide work to which our church is committed, such as:

1. Workshops on Stewardship and Missions
2. Stewardship Institutes and Every-Member-Enlistment
3. Laymen's Rallies
4. Women's Conferences
5. Pilgrim Fellowship Rallies, Camps and Summer Conferences

2. We recommend that our churches give serious consideration to the following recommendations adopted at the association meeting last year:

1. That each church set up a budget including all the financial needs of the church for the year and an amount expressing its rightful share in Our Christian World Mission, and that our people be asked to pledge to the budget in the spirit of this verse of Scripture: "Let every one of you lay aside, on the first day of the week, according as God has prospered you."

3. We recommend that our pastors and churches call upon our Area Minister to assist in the setting up of an adequate Stewardship program in each local church, and to conduct Stewardship Institutes and Every-Member Can-

vasses in the churches. We would suggest that no church is too small, or too large, to profit from such a program of enlistment and dedication.

From the Committee on Ministry and Churches:

In order that we may profit by the mistakes of the past, and in order that we may have happy pastors, happy churches and a well-ordered Association, we strongly urge our churches not to call as their pastor any man of another denomination unless he has been examined by the Committee on the Ministry and Churches, and is approved by the Executive Committee of the Association.

In many instances we are faced with a dilemma in the matter of giving adequate pastoral services to the churches. This could be remedied in most cases if our churches in adjoining communities would agree to call the same pastor and move him into their midst. If they would adopt the recommendations of the Committee on Missions and Stewardship, made to this session of our Association, they could easily provide sufficient salary and have the joy and blessings of his full time ministry.

In other cases, where pastors have to work at some other job to provide sufficient income for their families, the needed pastoral visitation could be provided if the pastors would work out a plan with their churches whereby they would remain in the community on their preaching days, having lunch with the families and calling in the homes in the afternoons. They could call upon the deacons, Sunday School officers and teachers to join in the visiting. Every family could be visited in a few weeks, resulting in increased attendance at church, increased enrollment in the Sunday School, and new members added to our churches. Unless we can provide more contacts between our pastors and their people we shall continue to have poor attendance at church services, small enrollment in our Sunday Schools, and few new members added to our church rolls.

* * * *

You will notice that, as in most cases, the ministers will have to take the initiative to carry forward these plans. Since the Association meeting a Ministers' Institute and Retreat has been planned for Saturday, April 16, and all the ministers of the Association are urged to meet for an all-day study of

News From An Old Friend

When the children in the rural areas of Northern Mindanao heard the "phut! phut! phut!" in the distance, they ran out to stand beside the road and wave as "Santa's sleigh" went by.

The "sleigh" was the bright red sidecar of a spanking new motorcycle operated by a gray-haired lady with twinkling eyes, merry dimples and a bow-like mouth that smiles a merry greeting to all along her route.

She is the Rev. Miss Leila Anderson, 67-year-old missionary extraordinary, known throughout the United States as the Pilgrim Circuit Rider of the United Church of Christ.

Retired by the denomination's Board for Homeland Ministries after two decades of almost constant travel in a self-contained van to work with Sunday School teachers of rural churches, she is now doing similar work in the Philippines under the United Church Board for World Ministries and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Miss Anderson brought her big step van — equipped with sleeping and cooking facilities and an "office" — with her when she came to the Philippines early in 1965; but in some areas of Mindanao the roads are too narrow or too rough or just not good enough for easy traveling in the van.

The motorcycle is the answer to this problem, and Miss Anderson has assured mission executives that she is having no trouble handling the machine.

The Rev. Miss Anderson has many friends throughout the Southeast Convention, who will rejoice that she is still active, still healthy, still cheerful, and still carrying on her faithful ministry to others.

our problems and opportunities. The Rev. Horace S. Sills, Secretary of our Division of Town and Country Church, together with the Rev. Karlton C. Johnson, Regional Secretary of the Stewardship Council, will be present as the main speakers and resource leaders. There will be opportunities for participation by all the pastors. The Rev. W. Walter Hall, the Rev. Olin E. Sheppard and the Area Minister are responsible for planning, publicizing and making this an outstanding success.

Plans are also under way to carry out the suggestion in the above report for Every-Member-Visitation in all of the churches.

Good News To Ministers!

It has just been announced that Oberlin School of Theology, which is one of our church-related seminaries, and Vanderbilt Divinity School will merge as of September 1, 1966. Although we have had helpful relationships with Vanderbilt Divinity School through the Atlanta Theological Foundation, and many of our pastors have been helped by it, the fact that one of our own seminaries will now be an integral part of Vanderbilt Divinity School opens the door wider to training for our ministers. Six professors and a student body of more than 100, together with all of its endowments, will be transferred from Oberlin to Vanderbilt. The young men in our churches should know of this new and greater opportunity to get their ministerial training from Vanderbilt, which is one of the leading seminaries in the south.

PF-YF Annual Conference

All advisors to our young people, and ministers as well, take note that the annual conference of the PF/YF will be held in our Huntsville Church March 26-27, 1966, and we urge young people from all of our churches, whether you have a youth organization or not, to attend this meeting for information and inspiration.

Details of the meeting will be sent as soon as they are available.

Lay Life And Work Meeting

The regional Lay Life and Work Committee and representatives will meet at Franklinton at Bricks, North Carolina, for planning for programs, citation of materials for use in local churches, etc., on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 11-12-13. Representatives of women's groups and laymen's groups from our area plan to attend. Local groups may learn of what was accomplished through their local organizations as soon as the results can be prepared for the churches.

One Great Hour Of Sharing!

Each member of every church should be given an opportunity to contribute to One Great Hour of Sharing during the Easter Season this year. Many churches in our denomination have given generously in the past (more than \$500,000.00 in 1965), and have made it possible for millions of hungry children to have food and clothes, shelter and friendship; to say nothing of the many other arms of outreach strengthened by our gifts to this fund.

Won't you see that your church participates this year.

New Film Available From Convention Office

The 16 mm. film, "THE LONG MARCH", is now available from the convention audio visual library. This film is especially recommended to be shown during the One Great Hour of Sharing program. It will gladly be sent to any local church, free of charge, that requests it. Please make your request well in advance of the date planned for showing.

Down And Out? Or Maybe, Just Down?

Someone has written a book called "Down and Out in London and Paris." Never mind Paris; a lot of people are down and right around us!

Many of us are burdened with serious problems — our marriage is failing, we're drinking too much, we feel pushed on the job, we've lost the faith we once had, we've lost our grip.

A church can't guarantee to always solve your problems, but it can offer a helping hand. It can help lighten your load by sharing it with you.

Start again. Renew your faith in God, in yourself, and in your fellow man.

Attend the church of your choice, but attend church.

What's A Mission?

Ask a man on the street about a mission or a missionary and you may get a vague answer about soup kitchens and Skid Row or hymn-singing natives on some faraway island.

But missions have changed a good deal in recent years as have many other patterns in our daily lives. Home Missions of the United Church of Christ concern themselves with overcrowded schools, with greater leisure, with narcotics addiction, with racial justice, with better colleges, with newer art forms, with migrant labor.

Who ever heard of a mission to "night people?" Who needs it?

Well, there are lots of people who need it. For example, thousands of people work at night in San Francisco. They have broken homes, children who need guidance, alcoholism, need for adequate housing, parents who must be cared for . . . and countless other human problems. The United Church of Christ, in association with some of its sister denominations, conducts a "night ministry" to serve these people —ordinary people, like all of us.

Our 22 churches in the Washington area have a "night ministry", too — ministering to these same human needs. In fact, our ministry goes pretty much around the clock.

Perhaps your ideas of the church in your neighborhood are as outdated as your ideas of missions. Why not drop in and speak to someone? No need to take a pledge or join up. Just come in. Then come again. We believe you will then continue to come.

Lately We've Branched Out!

We still have church in a church. But we also have it in an old horse stable in the middle of 640 trailer-homes in Dayton, Ohio.

We have a man on the "Strip" in Las Vegas. And on the ski slopes of Squaw Valley. And in the shopping center at Harundale Mall in Glen Burnie.

We figure if you won't come where we are, we'll come where you are.

We call it a listening ministry.

Our local United Church of Christ ministers are good listeners, too. Try them!

THE SOUTHEAST NEWS
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"Breakthrough" And "Target Ahead!"

Our denomination has prepared materials and is placing much emphasis on the educational program which we call "BREAKTHROUGH." Reports from all over the country indicate that where the program has been given the people are enthusiastic about it. Some churches in the convention have had it and are looking forward to fulfilling some of its goals. We have materials on hand and people who are willing to come to any local church that requests it.

If you have not had the program we believe you will want it and we shall help you arrange for it.

Attention Ministers!

This is to remind you that the deadline for ministers to sign up for Social Security is March 31, 1966! If you have not already signed up you should go immediately to your Social Security Board. Our denomination urges all ministers to join Social Security.

Convention Board Of Directors Meets

The Board of Directors of the Southeast Convention met in Atlanta on January 18, 1966, with almost a perfect attendance of its members. Reports were heard from its various committees showing that much work is being done in the various interests of the convention, and that progress is being made.

The Personnel Committee reported that it has not as yet secured a superintendent to replace Dr. James H. Lightbourne, Jr. It is making contacts and it is hoped that very soon they will be able to report favorably on this urgent matter.

You And Medicare

Every person 65 years of age and older is entitled to coverage by Medicare as of July 1, 1966. If you are drawing Social Security you need take no action to get the benefits of Section "A", which applies to hospital, nursing and nursing home care. But, to be covered by Section "B" you must return the card which was sent to you of recent date. All insurance companies urge all those 65 years old to take both sections of this coverage.

For those not covered by Social Security, if you are 65 or older, you are urged to go to the courthouse in your county or community and get instructions. You can be covered by Medicare even though you do not draw Social Security, and we urge every person to take this coverage because most insurance companies have already notified those who carry hospitalization that their policies will not be in force after July 1, 1966.

Never On Sunday?

A lot of people say they have nothing against religion but they don't like the institutional church. This puzzles us. It's a bit like saying they have nothing against education but they don't like schools!

We're not exactly sure what people mean by the "institutional church." We know our "institutions" aren't perfect. That is why we believe we must continuously reform and renew the church. That is why we experiment with new ways to make the church a 20th century "institution."

Such as — a ministry in a large shopping center

Sidewalk services in a large city

Supervised study hall at one church for children who need help in school work

Sacred opera used in worship in one church in Maryland

Pastoral counseling available to all who seek it at any time

We realize there is a great deal more to church and religion than the Sunday morning worship service. Still, we feel it is a good place to start.

The Southeast Convention Receives Gift Of \$10,000.00!

One of the fine laymen of one of our churches in the convention has just made a gift of \$10,000.00 to be used by the convention wherever it is needed. It is hoped that this fund may be used for building new churches and strengthening situations in the convention which need help.

So far as we know, this is the first such gift ever made by an individual to our convention. Our gratitude cannot be too great for the generosity, loyalty and vision of this fine layman. May he be enriched in his personal life in proportion to the gift which he has made to the Kingdom of God.

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